

Fall Newsletter 2024

INDIANA



Natural Resources
FOUNDATION

NOTES FROM *Our Team*



Erika Janak
Development
Coordinator South

The fall season in Indiana offers beautiful weather and stunning foliage, making it the perfect time to engage in outdoor activities and explore Indiana's public lands. Some of my favorite fall activities include mountain biking, hiking, and camping at DNR properties like Brown County State Park and Morgan-Monroe State Forest.

In my role at the Foundation, I've discovered a new favorite fall activity – our tree planting events through the Indiana Tree Project. These tree plantings have

allowed me to witness the incredible impacts of our partnerships on public land.

This November, we have another tree planting with our partners, Huston Solar. During our tree planting events, our corporate sponsors spend the day planting trees, enjoying the outdoors as a team, and learning from an interpretive program. Your personal investments support the expansion and growth of Indiana's forested land. The Indiana Tree Project is just one example of how a commitment to conservation and a love for Indiana's natural places can go further when we work together.

It's an honor to work with the dedicated DNR staff, donors, and guests as we share a passion for our unique public lands. I hope that as you read our newsletter, you take a moment to reflect on the outdoor activities and properties you cherish most in Indiana and consider the role you play in protecting and preserving Indiana's natural legacy.



Todd Wenninger
Development
Coordinator North

Like many of you, I eagerly welcome this season for many reasons, including opportunities to take in the cooler, crisper air. I was recently enjoying some solitude on a trail – one of my personal favorite outdoor activities – at Pokagon State Park and reflecting on my time working for the Indiana Natural Resources Foundation (INRF). It's been 16 months since I started, and I continue to be filled with gratitude as I consider it all.

Perhaps as cliché as it is to talk of the chill in the air, falling leaves, football, and pumpkin spice lattes this time of year, so too I suppose, is saying that my role with the Foundation is “all about relationships.” But

it's true—as much so as the excited anticipation of our favorite fall traditions.

Over the last year-plus, I've thoroughly enjoyed meeting all sorts of new people—INRF team members, DNR staff, and other outdoor enthusiasts, like you, from all around our beautiful state. Together, we've walked trails, planned events, sipped coffee, attended meetings, shared meals, exchanged emails, and planted trees; and I'm continually thankful for each opportunity to connect and hear why our natural resources matter to you. Regardless of your location, title, or specific area of interest, thank you for being a partner in caring for and enjoying the outdoors. I count it a remarkable privilege to be involved in the effort, and to get to meet so many like-minded people.

So, as you take some time to flip through the following pages, I invite you to further reflect on how your commitment to the outdoors is making a difference – in your own life, and in the lives of so many others – now and into the future. And if we've not yet crossed paths, I hope to soon!

Clifty Falls Colorblind Viewers

Getting outdoors and witnessing the yellows, oranges, and reds of the fall leaves is one of the most exciting parts of the year for many Hoosiers. While there are other great aspects of fall, like crisp weather, fun-filled festivals, and your favorite cozy sweater, the vibrant leaves are the backdrop that pulls it all together. But for some people, those colors aren't as dramatic and vivid.

Thanks to our partners at the Emma L. Snyder Charitable Foundation and support from the Friends of Clifty Falls, Clifty Falls State Park now offers those with red-green color blindness a chance to experience the vibrant color of Indiana fall. Two colorblind viewers, one of which is ADA accessible, were installed in the park earlier this year.

The viewers permanently sit atop the park's Lookout Point, where they will provide some colorblind guests with a unique experience for years to come. It is estimated that one in 12 men and one in 200 women are affected by varying levels of colorblindness.

“I have twin sons who are red-green colorblind, as was my father,” said Suzanne Arruda, member of Friends of Clifty Falls. “As a Clifty Falls State Park volunteer, I am thrilled that we can now offer a viewer that will enhance the view of fall colors and make their beauty more accessible for all of our guests.”

While Arruda's sons and many others will benefit from this project, it is just one example of Indiana State Parks' concerted efforts to make the outdoors more accessible.

“We look forward to the enhanced view of Clifty Canyon that this will provide for those who experience color blindness,” said Terry Coleman, director of Indiana State Parks. “The installation of these viewers continues our work to provide accessible features at our properties.”

Located in Louisville, the Emma L. Snyder Charitable Foundation serves Kentucky and southern Indiana by



providing grant opportunities in support of parks, lands, waters, and recreational opportunities. Our relationship with the Snyder Foundation dates to 2012, and many exciting projects have come to fruition during that time.

Generous grants have supported accessible fishing piers, interpretive signage, motorized wheelchairs, nature center improvements, and many more projects. The colorblind viewers are just the latest installment in the Snyder Foundation's generous support of the INRF and Indiana's beloved outdoors.

Next time you're visiting Clifty Falls, stop by Lookout Point and get a glimpse at how vibrant the future of Indiana's public land is, thanks to the generosity of our donors and partners.

Who We Are

Jody Kress
Executive Director

Cheryl Hampton
Administrator

Ethan Foster
Communications Manager

Erika Janak
Development Coordinator South

Todd Wenninger
Development Coordinator North

Missi Bush-Sawtelle
Chair

Richard Cockrum
Vice-Chair

Karen Valiquett
Secretary

Cam Clark
Treasurer

Brad Skillman
Member

Shawn Kelley
Member

Matthew Kiley
Member

Joe Clark
Member



Huston Solar is Planting Connections

There are so many things to appreciate about fall. One of the things we look forward to most each autumn is joining our dedicated partners to expand Indiana’s forests through the Indiana Tree Project.

This year, we will once again join our friends from Huston Solar at Prophetstown State Park as they continue their support of the INRF and Indiana’s public lands. The group will add approximately 3,000 trees to the park as they support the Indiana Tree Project for the third consecutive year.

After Huston Electric officially launched its solar division 2020, it wasn’t long before Huston Solar pledged to give back to Indiana’s natural resources by planting one tree for every kilowatt of solar energy they install. The inaugural planting took place at Morgan-Monroe State Forest in 2022 before 2023’s gathering was moved to Prophetstown, a meaningful location for Huston.

“Prophetstown is practically in our backyard and it’s a place where many of our team members spend time with

their families camping, biking, or simply enjoying nature,” said Cam Smith, Huston’s solar division manager. “To be able to enhance the park’s environment through our volunteer efforts makes this project even more special to us.”

The geographic and emotional ties of the Huston employees are important, but the park also provides the ideal location for another tree planting because of habitat restoration efforts taking place there. Property staff work diligently to restore the oak savanna at the park, a once prominent habitat of the area, and Huston’s efforts directly support that work.

Oak savannas are unique land plots that feature a combination of grasslands and sparse tree coverage. Due to the latter, savannas give wildlife, pollinators, and a range of plants the opportunity to succeed with more sunlight and less competition.

“Pheasants, wild turkey, quail, deer, bobcats, and coyotes are some of the wildlife we see in this habitat,”

Jenna Parks Freeman, Prophetstown’s interpretive naturalist, told Huston volunteers at their last tree planting. “None of these have been reintroduced to the property by us; they return because of the improved and increased habitat.”

With each planting, Indiana’s forested landscape grows, as do the relationships of those involved. Each planting generally includes a lunch and an educational component, usually a hike, that allows the volunteers to spend time reflecting and learning outside of their normal work setting.

“Huston is excited to return to Prophetstown this fall

with our team of volunteers,” Smith said. “We’re proud that the tree planting has become an event that our team looks forward to each year. It’s a fun experience to volunteer together, improving the environment and strengthening our sense of teamwork.”

Partnerships like this are allowing the Indiana Tree Project to thrive. With dedicated support from our partners and donors, tens of thousands of trees are planted on Indiana’s public lands each year. If you’re interested in supporting healthy Hoosier forests, visit our website to learn more about the Indiana Tree Project.



Brewing for the Outdoors



Pints for Parks Continues to Give Back

After a long day in the outdoors, you've relaxed into your campsite as dinner cooks over the fire. Accompanying those wonderful sounds and smells of camping is a refreshing can of the current Pints for Parks brew. While you sip on Moontown Brewing Company's latest masterpiece, you are reminded that you're also supporting Indiana's public lands with each taste-filled drink. The Pints for Parks series is the perfect partner to your outdoor adventures.

When Moontown launched the Pints for Parks series in 2020, they set out

to support Indiana State Parks through innovative brewing. Now, 11 beers into the journey, the series has gained a dedicated following and continues to give back to Indiana's public lands.

"We get visitors from all over the state to try the beers and collect the labels," said Moontown co-owner Bobby Mattingly. "It has been really fulfilling to see the amount of support we've received, and it feels like we've done a small part in raising awareness for Indiana's parks and their natural beauty."

Pints for Parks began with McCormick's Creek, a juicy hazy IPA that represented Indiana's first state park. As they work through the Indiana State Park properties as they were established, the Moontown crew has explored all corners of the state and a variety of brew types. From the dark and hoppy India Brown Ale of Brown County to the refreshing Helles that was Shakamak, each brew is uniquely crafted before being canned behind distinct artwork that highlights the represented property.

Most recently, Pints for Parks made the journey south with Starve Hollow, an India pale lager. The property is known for its fantastic fishing and spectacular camping, making the brew the perfect match for late summer adventures. A fan favorite already, the beer won silver at the 2024 Indiana Brewers Cup.

While we celebrate and enjoy each installment of the series, we're most grateful for the way Moontown's generosity will benefit Indiana's outdoors. A portion of proceeds from each beer is



donated to the INRF and designated for projects at Indiana State Parks. At Turkey Run State Park, one meaningful project is already complete, thanks to the program. When the steps at the iconic Sunset Point needed repair, \$2,500 of Pints for Parks donations fulfilled that need.

Asked what his favorite part of the series has been so far, Mattingly immediately responded by mentioning that special project. With hundreds of thousands visiting the park each year, the repaired stairs will serve Hoosiers and guests alike for years to come.

"We wanted to focus on a project that would serve the public," said Chris Newcomb, Turkey Run property manager. "Repairing the steps at Sunset Point was a great opportunity to partner with Moontown and make an impact on the park."

As we await the 12th beer, Tippecanoe

River, it's easy to look back with excitement on all the success of the program so far. But ultimately, Pints for Parks is just getting started. Mattingly and head brewer Cody Peczkowski are excited to keep marching down the trail in support of our state parks.

"Indiana really has some great geography, flora, and fauna, and we just want to help preserve it," Mattingly said. "This all just comes from our love of our underrated state as far as the outdoors go."

Each time a brew is released, you can visit one of Moontown Brewing's locations to get it on draft or in commemorative four-packs.

We're thankful for our dedicated donors and partners and the positive impact they make on Indiana's outdoors. If you would like more information on becoming a partner, please contact us.

Expanding & Protecting

Northeast Indiana's Natural Resources



Since 2012, our dedicated partners with Northeast Indiana Conservation Partnership & Preservation (Northeast IN Partnership) have raised funds in support of increasing public land, improving habitat, and expanding outdoor recreation opportunities. During the group's 12-year history, they have raised more than \$1.6 million, helped acquire 821 acres of public land, and supported the restoration of more than 500 acres of habitat.

In May, we celebrated these accomplishments at the biennial Northeast IN Partnership fundraiser. Dozens of conservationists gathered in Fort Wayne for the night of celebration, and by the end of the evening, gifts and pledges totaled more than \$200,000, meaning continued impact for northeast Indiana's public lands and wildlife.

"We're grateful to have such dedicated donors and friends in northeast Indiana," said Dale Budzon, Northeast IN Partnership co-chair. "Their generous support means more public lands and outdoor recreation opportunities for all Hoosiers to enjoy."



Throughout the evening, many successful projects were discussed. One that found its way into many conversations was the acquisition of the Buchanan Unit at Mallard Roost Wetland Conservation Area. Adding 158 acres of upland prairie and wetland to the property was a major highlight of 2023 for all involved. The support of Northeast IN Partnership, alongside other dedicated partners, made our acquisition of the property possible, permanently protecting more wildlife habitat and outdoor recreation in the area.

The Buchanan Unit is just one example of the positive impact this group, Indiana DNR, and our dedicated donors and partners have on Indiana's public lands. Other successful projects in the region have included:

- 179 acres of wetland and prairie restoration at Cedar Swamp Wetland Conservation Area created important habitat in the region.
- A 25-acre addition at Crooked Lake Nature Preserve maintains vital habitat for numerous endangered species.
- The addition of a public access site at Kuhn Lake increased accessibility to the property's outdoor recreation opportunities.
- 82 total acres added across Durham Lake and Pisgah Marsh protect a variety of ecosystems, including 65 acres of restorable game bird habitat.



Learn more about the Northeast IN Partnership and projects in the region at our website, IndianaNRF.org



Discover the Outdoors

A Record Year of Outdoor Education

Thanks to the ongoing generosity of donors like you, more than 4,800 Hoosier students will experience an exciting day of outdoor learning through the Discover the Outdoors field trip grant program this school year. With a program high of nearly \$25,000 expected to be distributed, a record number of students will venture to an Indiana State Parks property.

Offered in partnership with Indiana State Parks, Discover the Outdoors was established in 2013 in memory of long-time DNR employee Tom Huck. An advocate for DNR's interpretive programs, Huck's memory lives on through the educational and interactive field trips that more than 25,000 students have taken part in.

The anticipation for the 2024-25 school year began earlier than normal for applying educators. In the spring, we shared an exciting update that the maximum grant amount increased to \$500 per application. This increase was made possible by the continued support from our donors and partners.

"We have always supported education, and we love the outdoors," said Kerry and Alice Richmond, dedicated INRF donors. "As volunteers at our local school, we've realized that some children lack experiences out in nature. What better way to combine the two interests than by supporting the Discover the Outdoors program?"

Discover the Outdoors has benefited students in all corners of the Hoosier State. Trips have visited nearly every Indiana State Parks property, and each is a unique opportunity for students to learn about Indiana's wildlife, flora, and cultural history.

At Prophetstown, students spent their day learning about the park's grasslands and fens, wildlife that's unique to the area, and its expansive Native American cultural history. A little more than two hours south, students at Brown County State Park received educational programming on the area's dense forests, deep valleys, and native reptiles. The differences between these two trips showcase the diversity of Indiana's natural

resources and the importance of educating the next generation.

"The Discover the Outdoors field trip grant program removes barriers, providing access to life-changing educational experiences for all students," said Jenna Parks Freeman, Prophetstown's interpretive naturalist. "I believe our youngest visitors are better equipped to be future decision makers when they have opportunities to step outside the classroom for immersive experiences outdoors."

You can learn more about the field trips, the history of the program, and how you can support the next generation of conservation leaders by visiting our website.



Tree Shirts are back this November!

Every purchase of a Tree Shirt supports the Indiana Tree Project and our efforts to reforest Indiana.

For updates, follow us on social media:
@IndianaNRF on Facebook and Instagram



Celebrate & Preserve

INDIANA'S NATURAL LEGACY

When you donate to the INRF, you directly support important conservation initiatives around the state. Your gifts create outdoor education opportunities for Hoosier students, help acquire new public lands, expand Indiana's forests, and so much more. Together, we will celebrate and preserve Indiana's natural legacy for generations to come.

Donate Today



indiananrf.org/donate

Donations are tax deductible under section 170 (c)(1) of the IRS code.

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for our Monthly Newsletter

We're making waves for conservation and outdoor recreation in the Hoosier state, and so can you. Keep up with us by signing up for our e-newsletter. Receive feature stories, news and photos in your inbox each month.

Sign up by visiting IndianaNRF.org and click **Subscribe**.



IndianaNRF.org



inrf@dnr.IN.gov



[@IndianaNRF](https://www.instagram.com/IndianaNRF)

INDIANA NATURAL RESOURCES FOUNDATION | 402 W. Washington St. W256 | Indianapolis, IN 46204 | 317-234-5447

Indiana Natural Resources Foundation
402 W. Washington St., W256
Indianapolis IN 46204-2243